

**What is happening with the Bachelor?  
Expectations and acceptance  
- some Austrian Experiences**

**Helmut M. Guggenberger**  
Institut für Soziologie  
Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften



## Intention

- to make a subject of discussion
  - ongoing developments within the context of HE system in Austria
  - in particular: recent process of implementing three-cycle structure à la Bolognese
    - Bachelor
    - Master
    - Doctor, PhD
- varying the title
  - „Meeting the challenges of the three-cycle structure“ ?
- no empirical findings in a narrower sense
  - experience
    - AAU Klagenfurt; senates, UniKo etc.
  - surveys
    - Campbell/Brechelmacher 2007 etc.
  - → **survey on the situation of graduates from 2003/04 – 2007/08**
- wider point of view: implementing Bologna Process under the regimes of
  - economization
  - „autonomy“

## Recent history: Reforming the Austrian university by law

- **Universitätsstudienengesetz 1997**
  - single diploma studies (regularly 4 years; with some exceptions)
  - possibility: Bakk. (3 years)
- **Universitätsgesetz 2002: three-cycle structure**
  - bachelor studies
    - 180 ECTS-credits (1 = workload 25 hours; as a rule 30 ECTS-credits/semester, → 3 years)
    - akademischer Grad „Bakkalaureus, -a“
    - 1. draft 2000, 1. amendment 2006: → Grad „Bachelor“
    - 2. amendment 2009: orientation phase (01.10.2011); precondition to implement a master study at university = bachelor study at university
  - master studies
    - 120 ECTS-credits (→ 2 years)
    - akademischer Grad „Magister, -tra“
    - 1. draft 2000, 1. amendment 2006: → Grad „Master“
  - NEW doctorate studies, PhD programmes (from 2009/10 on)
    - 2. amendment 2008: 3 years, no measurement by ECTS-credits
    - ??? PhD / professional [industrial] doctorate

## Some facts and figures

- At Austrian universities in winter term 2008/09 **913** study courses were established, among them 753 (**83%**) bachelor resp. master studies (2000/01, when monitoring began, 2,5%). At universities of applied sciences the respective numbers were **276 / 269 (98%, 180 BA / 89 MA)**.
- **40 % of all active studies at universities** were according to the new system (Boku 84%, TU Wien 70%); **at FH 79%**.
- Mobility programmes:
  - Outgoing students in the framework of a mobility programme: at universities 1,5% (graduates 18%); FH 5,7%.
  - Incoming students: universities 1,7%; FH 4,3%.
- Foreign students: universities 22,5%; FH 11%.

BM.W\_F=2009:8

## Graduations AT

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
<b>universities</b>									
Diploma	15.074	14.639	16.174	<b>16.273</b>	<b>15.814</b>	<b>15.578</b>	<b>14.229</b>	<b>14.512</b>	
Bachelor	2	84	436	<b>1.454</b>	<b>2.255</b>	<b>3.069</b>	<b>4.168</b>	<b>5.152</b>	
Master	-	5	36	<b>237</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>1.123</b>	<b>1.637</b>	<b>2.050</b>	
Doctor	2.079	2.135	2.219	2.465	2.250	2.160	2.087	2.196	
<b>Fachhochschulen</b>									
Diploma			2.658	<b>2.882</b>	<b>4.060</b>	<b>4.617</b>	<b>4.835</b>	<b>3.882</b>	
Bachelor			-	<b>79</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>1.307</b>	<b>2.783</b>	
Master			-	-	-	<b>87</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>631</b>	
<b>private universities</b>									
Diploma						25	24	56	
Bachelor						207	301	261	
Master						223	218	255	
Doctor						10	20	11	

[http://portal.tmbw.at/portal/page?\\_pageid=33495288\\_did=portal8\\_schema=PORTAL&cid=ref&tpl=6](http://portal.tmbw.at/portal/page?_pageid=33495288_did=portal8_schema=PORTAL&cid=ref&tpl=6) (03.11.2009)

## Some aims and a main emphasis (AT)

- Shaping a two-cycle study system
  - Bachelor as a level of qualification, relevant for the European labour market
  - Master
- Complete arrangement of studies offered - aims
  - shortening time of study
  - higher number of university graduates
- Bachelor studies are regarded as studies,
  - serving as – scientific or artistic – vocational preparation (*Berufsvorbildung*)
  - and qualification for vocational activities, that long for appliance of – scientific and artistic – methods
- Master studies are regarded as studies,
  - serving as deepened or additional – scientific or artistic – vocational preparation (*Berufsvorbildung*) on the basis of bachelor studies
- Further aims: supporting employability of graduates with bachelor degree, also in public service

BM.W\_F 2009:38

Questions, worrying us:  
Overview

- Comparability
- Modularization
- Relevance for the the labour market / the world of work



## Questions .1

- **comparability**
  - national
  - transnational
- → Bologna aim 1: mobility ! ?
- extend of standardization ?
- permeability, e.g. *Fachhochschulen* – universities
  
- „It is a common misconception of the Bologna process that the duration of each of the three cycles has been rigidly prescribed.“ (EURYDICE 2009: 17)
- Convergence in the models for the first two cycles is clearly taking place“ (cf. EURYDICE 2009: 9)
  - 19 countries ... 180 ECTS credit (3 years model) – in AT exclusive model
  - 11 countries privileged 240 ECTS credits (2 years model)



## Questions .2

- **modularization**
  - meaning of „module“
  - extension of 1 module: 6, 12, 18 ECTS-credits; 8, 16, 24; anyway ...
    - e.g. AAU Klagenfurt (statutes, not law):
      - In 2002 term „module“ established; 1 module = 12 ECTS-credits, exception: half modules (6), not stated more precisely (to be completed in one semester etc.); → curricula 2004 ff.
      - curricula: compulsory subjects (*Pflichtfächer*) – partly compulsory optional subjects (*gebundene Wahlfächer*; to be chosen out of a list, 20 %) – free optional subjects (*freie Wahlfächer*; free to choose, 10 %)
      - In 2009 term „module“ cancelled; modification of curricula 2009ff.
  - completion in the course of 1 semester / anytime ?
  - consecutive model / free model
  - transdisziplinarität
- → Bologna aim 1: mobility ! ?
  - parts of study in Konstanz, Klagenfurt, Grenoble / (automatical acknowledgement / individual screening..

### Questions .3

- **relevance**
  - Bachelor → labour market (i.e. transfer medium) / system of organized work, employment or self employment
  - Bachelor + Master → labour market (transfer medium) / system of organized work, employment or self employment
  - 2 models
    - diachrone: Bachelor – employment – Master – employment – NEW Doctorate
    - synchrone: Bachelor + employment – Master + employment
  - → Bologna aim 2: employability ! ?
  - Position of economization *versus* academic virtues
    - drawn into question: unity (an integrated whole) of research (generating knowledge) and teaching (transferring knowledge)
    - academic quality and employability: link has to be defined

### Views on bachelor studies: the empirical challenge

- Problem: The European Higher Education Area is an area of differing velocities.
- So there is a challenge for HE research:
  - At present time there is no real empirical evidence, concerning academic and vocational aspects of the new bachelor studies; so there is no knowledge *ex post*.
  - Following this, we have to rely on estimations *ex ante*, on experts' view (knowing, that experts also are susceptible to mistakes).
  - From now on, we have the double chance
    - to gain empirical knowledge on bachelor studies, esp. in the field of tension of „academic virtues“ and „employability“;
    - to compare the „old“ study programmes with the „new“ one.

## The experts view *ex ante* .1

- The new Bachelor and the labour market (Campbell/Brechelmacher 2007)
- Analyzing the points of view
  - of enterprises
  - of universities and universities of applied sciences
- Research project by order of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich)
- Central formulation of question
  - **(1) How should Bachelor studies be organized to educate Bachelor graduates as well qualified for occupation as possible ?**
  - **(2) How should contextual conditions of bachelor studies be structured, to support vocational qualification ?**
  - + to explore matching between qualification profile of graduates and demand of labour markets
- 70 interviews with experts
  - **enterprises**
  - public resp. academic institutions; universities, *Fachhochschulen*

## The experts view *ex ante* . 2: recommendations of enterprises .1

- The Bachelor normally will be the first degree out of a number of degrees („Life Long Learning“)
  - Investment of time: Studies should more be distributed over whole life periode – in sum more, but distributed in another way
  - opportunity: Between BA and MA-degree some years of vocational experience
- It is necessary to offer simultaneously full time studies and part time (*berufsbegleitende*) BA- and MA-study courses.
  - consecutive MA-studies
  - MA-studies in the sense of continuing education, accompanying study

### The experts view *ex ante* .3: recommendations of enterprises .2

- Employability means to provide BA-students with competences and qualifications. This longs für a combination of types of knowledge
  - spezialized knowledge (*Fachwissen*) - as a necessary precondition
  - practical knowledge (*Praxis/praxisorientiertes Anwendungswissen*)
  - social skills/personality (*Persönlichkeit*) – a sufficient criterium for career
- Internships (*Praktika*) as a part of studies, intensivated contacts with business
  - to convey practically orientated, applied knowledge; to strengthen employability
  - to develop job outlines (*Berufsbilder*)
- Challenge for enterprises: Meeting their employees' academic orientated interesstes towards continuing education.

## Selected practical evidence

- Conference „Vocational aspects of the bachelor degree“ (Austrian Universities Conference, Innsbruck 9.11.2009)
- Some findings
  - Characteristics of the new study system (AK= employees' representation)
    - lack of information; problems of image
    - recommendations: continuing dialogue with world of work (curricula); better practice of acknowledgement, checking the possibility of studying (*Studierbarkeit*), arranging accompanying studies, broad campaign of information about new degrees
  - Learning programmes, accompanying research (Faculty of interdisciplinary research & continuing education)
    - programme A: 1. supporting students in vocational orientation, 2. working on a practical project (→ occupational field), 3. developing „process competence“
    - programme B: 1. vocational orientation, 2. interdisciplinary research, 3. social competence, analyzing social networks
    - research: demand for „process competence“ (→ processes of change)
      - \*) „Über Prozesskompetenz verfügt eine Person, wenn sie in der Lage ist, vernetzt und in Prozessen zu denken und zu handeln. Dies setzt voraus, dass Fach- und Sozialkompetenz zur Lösung von Fragestellungen und Problemlösungen herangezogen werden.“ (Hellmer)

Uniko 2009

## Particular empirical evidence

- „How economy thinks about the Bachelor“ (Communication science, Salzburg/AT, 2009)
- Results
  - Three quarters of interviewed persons say, that they are well or very well familiar with new study architecture (BA/MA).
  - Demands concerning BA graduates don't differ from demands concerning MA graduates: Differences are give regarding additional qualifications.
  - Higher demands concerning MA graduates are given in the following areas:
    - theoretical knowledge, research orientation, specialisation, method competency, projekt management, scientific work, leading competencies
  - Bachelor studies should be orientated towards profession as well as towards science. At the same time they should be arranged rather broad than specialised.
  - Potential employers prefer vocational activities between bachelor and master studies.

Mosler 2009: 6

• “  
”



## Typologies .1

- phenotypes of "the student"
  - characteristic figures
  - attitudes toward attending the university
  - study orientation
  - study motivation: final – temporal – causal
  - political orientations, social values (students, graduates, academics)
- meanings of being a student
  - Universities may perceive their students as "customers", or "partners", or "pupils" (and treat them according to this perception). Students may perceive their time at university according to one of these definitions: "I, customer"; "I, partner"; "I, schoolboy/-girl" (and act according to these perceptions).
  - The specific understanding of the students' role corresponds to the specific understanding of the university. It may be understood as: enterprise, *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* or school.

## Typologies .2

Trying to identify perceptions of "university" and "student", regarding perceptions as an important basis for orientation and action, we may gain the following scheme:

customer	partner	pupil
- demands for goods and services (high quality / low price)	- searches for knowledge; insight into [latest] scientific findings, discussion	- wants to be educated (to become "employable")
enterprise	universitas	school
- offers goods and services (mass vs. excellence; minimizing costs) - is in competition with others (outside); generalized competition (inside) - "customer relation management"	- opens its borders regularly for new members (freshmen, -women) - scholars and students become partners for some time; "partner relation management" (incl. "alumni") - students move from one university to another (principle of prestige; competition of best ideas)	- continues traditional school's setting (Gem. <i>Verschulung</i> ) - preset curricula, frontal teaching (maybe use of new media) - hierarchy (knowing / not [yet] knowing persons)

## Typologies .3

- Theses:
  - Bachelor studies strengthen the type „customer“, maybe the type „pupil“.
  - They do this according to the organizational and political context of Higher Education systems.

## Trends, developments

- Reforms of Higher Education, subsequently to the Bologna process, tend to strengthen an understanding like "university = enterprise, education = business".
- Trends all over Europe, nationally differentiated, are heading towards commodification of *Bildung*, and towards training for "employability".
- 2 processes
  - **economization**
  - **Bologna Process**
- the problem with economization (cf. Konrad P. Liessmann et alii)
  - Is the university no longer the central place for scientific work ?
    - i.e. producing, administrating, conveying knowledge
    - i.e. critique is constitutive, as a vehicle of progress
  - Are the basics of knowledge, science and critique radically drawn into question ?
    - production, passing of knowledge affected by economization
    - role model of enterprises proposed to universities (New Public Management)
    - emancipatoric potential of economization

## Typologies, developments

- future perspectives
  - future of the university - scenarios, regarding universities in the future (Huber 2008):
    - learning university
      - no competition between universities; organization adapts itself
    - interdisciplinary university
      - crosses borders, strengthens usability (societal problems)
    - entrepreneurial university
      - acts economically, efficiency!
    - excellent university
      - → differentiation among universities, hegemony of excellence
  - Probably they will exist at the same time, and within the evolving "European Higher Education Area". What we do not know, are the probable consequences of this kind of differentiation under the regime of economization.

## Facit

- There are some experiences, meanwhile accumulated and partly systematized; and there are some problems, meanwhile more sharply to be recognized:
  - mobility between universities, between universities of applied sciences, between university and university of applied sciences
  - international mobility
  - autonomy of universities versus uniform/homogeneous study architecture
  - Narrow structures – schooling (*Verschulung*)
  - shortening of study duration
  - reducing drop out

## References

- Campbell, David F. J.; Brechelmacher, Angelika (2007): Bachelor Neu und der Arbeitsmarkt. Analyse der Sichtweisen von wirtschaftlichen Unternehmen und von Universitäten und Fachhochschulen. Formulierung von Empfehlungen. Forschungsprojekt im Auftrag der WKÖ (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich). Institut für Wissenschaftskommunikation und Hochschulforschung, Fakultät für Interdisziplinäre Forschung und Fortbildung (IFF, Standort Wien), Universität Klagenfurt, Wien. Online verfügbar unter [http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/wiho/downloads/studie\\_bachelor\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/wiho/downloads/studie_bachelor_FINAL.pdf) (11.11.2009)
- Huber, Michael (2008): Die Zukunft der Universität. In: Soziologie, Jg. 37, H. 3, S. 275–291.
- Liesmann, Konrad Paul (2006): Theorie der Unbildung. Die Irrtümer der Wissensgesellschaft. 1. Aufl. Wien: Zsolnay.
- Molser, Rudolf: Berufliche Relevanz des Bachelors am Beispiel der Universität Salzburg. Präsentation bei der Veranstaltung der Österreichischen Universitätenkonferenz „Im Focus: Berufliche Relevanz des Bachelor-Abschlusses.“ Innsbruck, 9. November 2009. Online verfügbar unter [http://www.uniko.ac.at/bologna\\_projekte/workshops\\_konferenzen/#A3221](http://www.uniko.ac.at/bologna_projekte/workshops_konferenzen/#A3221) (11.11.2009)
- Pastemack, Peer; Bloch, Roland; Gellert, Claudius; Hölcher, Michael; Kreckel, Reinhard; Lewin, Dirk et al. (o. J. (2006)): Die Trends der Hochschulbildung und ihre Konsequenzen. Wissenschaftlicher Bericht für das Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur der Republik Österreich. Herausgegeben von Wissenschaft und Kultur Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wien. Online verfügbar unter [http://www.bmwf.gv.at/up/bads/tx\\_bmwfcontent1/studie\\_trends\\_hsbildung.pdf](http://www.bmwf.gv.at/up/bads/tx_bmwfcontent1/studie_trends_hsbildung.pdf) bzw. <http://ids.hof.uni-halle.de/documents/11367.pdf> (11.11.2009)
- Scholz, Christian; Stein, Volker (Hg.) (2009): Bologna-Schwarzbuch. Bonn: Deutscher Hochschulverband (Forum, Heft 28).

Thank you for your attentiveness !

---

HG

[helmut.guggenberger@uni-klu.ac.at](mailto:helmut.guggenberger@uni-klu.ac.at)



## Appendix .1 Conclusions

- pointing out problematic tendencies → identifying desiderata for research and policy making
  - student's attitudes, study orientations, study behaviour ...
  - organizational preconditions: Bachelor – Master – Dr./pHD
  - ... regime of economization
- Let us be realistic !
  - no chance to recall the type of university "à la Humboldt" ?
  - no chance to realize an idealistic model of *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* ?
  - The principle of autonomy at present time is an ideological concept, covering up (new) dependency on politics (state) and economy (big enterprises).
  - It is not true, that the classical idea of the university is useless. It is still alive and well: a critical point of view, a critical corrective to be held up against the foreseeable scenarios. The idea may help us to compare assertions (eg. concerning Bachelor studies) with reality, so it is not just an idle boast.

## Appendix 2.1

### The university and the social structure .1

- **study courses, curricula**
  - adaptation to social and cultural changes
    - Knowledge society
    - Globalization
      - mobility
      - interculturality
  - development of disciplines (incl. trans- and interdisciplinarity)
  - regulations / over-regulated
  - building stones, elements (modulare system)
  - meeting the challenges of Bologna-Process
    - *mobility, employability*
    - *opportunity / ability*
- **Thesis: The HE system is an system for reinforcing structural differences (social, cultural disparities)**
  - (new) differences, disparities
    - gender, social strata
    - age, migration
  - → profession, political and cultural participation

## Appendix .2.2

### The university and the social structure .2

- **status**

- role „university teacher“

- part roles: researcher (+), teacher (~), manager or administrator
- → to earn respect; tu further one's career ?

- „role student“

- revolte vs. resignation, adaptation ?
- point of view: customer / partner / pupil ...

- **near to / far away from education**

- gender

- mainstreaming, monitoring

- class, strata

- vertical mobility (up / dow)
- monitoring ?

## Appendix .3 The university and its future

- futures of the university (Huber 2008)
  - New Public Management
    - praxis orientation, usefulness of research, organisational reform
  - „The universities of the future“
    - learning university
    - interdisciplinary universität
    - entrepreneurial university
    - excellent university
  - trends (Huber 2008)
    - economization
      - and privatizierung (cf. Graßl 2008)
    - Bologna-Process
      - evident: „Systemfehler“ und „Problemeruptionen“ (Scholz/Stein (Hg.) 2009)
      - reform: no „krisenhafter Ausnahmezustand“, but belongs to normal functioning of the university (Steinert 2008)
    - social selection
      - HIS: Bachelor, but also high drop-out-rates (Heublein/Schmelzer/Sommer 2008)
      - Who is the drop-out ?